

FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

State Advisory Committee Meeting

Minutes

December 3, 2007

Hampton Inn, Gaylord, MI

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Gerald Grossman, Grossman Forestry Co. (Stewardship Adv. Comm. Chair)
Donna LaCourt, DNR State Forester
Tom Stone, CFM Forester, DNR FMFMD
Yu Man Lee, Michigan Natural Features Inventory
Dean Solomon, MSU Extension
John VanDyke, Private landowner
Debra Huff, FSP Coordinator, DNR FMFMD
Kerry Wieber, Forest Legacy Coordinator, DNR FMFMD
Kathleen Ryan, NRCS RC&D
Des Jones, Exec. Director, Michigan Tree Farm
Tom Ward, State Forester, USDA-NRCS
Rich Bowman, The Nature Conservancy
George Berghorn, Mi Forest Products Council
Brian Picolo, DNR LIP Program

INTRODUCTORY BUSINESS:

Jerry Grossman opened the meeting at 10 am and asked for any changes to the minutes, which had been sent earlier. Minutes were not available in hard copy so any changes should be sent to Debra Huff for inclusion. The agenda was approved, John VanDyke moved to accept the agenda and Debra Huff seconded it.

FOREST LEGACY

Kerry Wieber provided an update on the Forest Legacy program and also requested that the Forest Legacy subcommittee be revitalized. Kerry would like to have the names of those who wish to serve on the Forest Legacy Subcommittee no later than March 1, 2008. Everyone on the committee is welcome to volunteer or to nominate others. The Subcommittee can review and make recommendations to bring back to the main Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee.

The update on the Forest Legacy program is attached as Appendix A, to these minutes.

STATE FORESTER UPDATE

The DNR operating budget is significantly less than even a few years ago. Results of budget cuts will be closure of campgrounds, not grooming certain trails, and curtailing some private lands assistance. There has been a decrease in the timber markets, too.

In the past few years, there has been a legislative shift at the state level, to decrease general fund money to support fire fighting, which caused those activities to be paid from our forest development funds. This has all caused the budget for forestry activities to decrease. Nationally, , the federal State and Private funds are decreasing. In FY 08, we will be competing with other states for grants. The USFS will take 15% of the funds we were normally allocated,

and make those funds available for grant proposals from all the NE states. This percentage is projected to increase to 25% by FY09.

The southern states already went through the competition process and have allocated those grants to states. Jerry Grossman noted that the FSAC needs the details of the competitive process in order to provide input. Donna agreed to share the priorities for the competitive process with the group.

FOREST LAND ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Debra Huff provided an overview of how the FLEP program was implemented in Michigan and also provided the information that our FLEP funds that were committed to contracts before the grant ran out (September 30, 2007), were extended! Full summary is in Appendix B.

FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Debra Huff gave an update on the Forest Stewardship program. Plans written have increased, there were 256 plans completed in FY 2007. This is partly due to the interest in the Carbon Pilot project, and the new Qualified Forest Property Act., which requires a forest management plan. Several Outreach and Education grants were not completed, several due to Conservation Districts losing the forestry personnel who were going to do the work. Training was discussed, as there is a training session planned for Agriculture and Natural Resources Week at MSU on February 29, and two more sessions for training new plan writers are hoped for. The Managed Forest Carbon Offset Trading pilot program is complete and the summary is being prepared by Delta Institute. There were 44 landowners who enrolled through the Group Tree Farm system and the carbon credits have not yet been traded. However, the Chicago Climate Exchange has accepted the baseline estimation protocol, so this pilot project is leading the way for carbon credits on forests. The budget for Forest Stewardship and other federally funded programs is being reduced nationally. It is reduced by 15% for FY2008 and projected to be reduced by 25% in the next fiscal year. States must now write grant proposals for new projects that will address national forest priorities, and meet state objectives, in order to get money back into the state. Currently, the State Forester is working on compiling proposals from Michigan to submit. Any proposal(s) Michigan submits can potentially cover Forest Health, Fire, Urban & Community Forestry, and Forest Stewardship.

TREE FARM PARTNERSHIP WITH FSP

Deb Huff reported that she and Des Jones, from Michigan Tree Farm, have met and come to an agreement that a check sheet will be developed that allows plan writers determine what elements will need to be added to a Tree Farm to make it into a Forest Stewardship plan. There is also interest in signing an agreement to allow current FSP plans to become Tree Farm plans, since they incorporate all the elements required of a Tree Farm plan. This agreement will be drafted by March 2008.

SPATIAL ANALYSIS PROJECT

Deb Huff discussed the Spatial Analysis Project. Michigan has completed Phase One, which includes the mandatory 12 layers listed below

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|------------------------|-----------------|
| 1) Wildfire assessment | 7) Forest pests |
| 2) Forest patches | 8) Wetlands |

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 3) Proximity of forested land to public land | 9) Riparian areas |
| 4) Private forested land | 10) Public water supplies |
| 5) T&E species | 11) Slope |
| 6) Changes in households | 12) Priority watersheds |

At our February meeting, the FSP Advisory Committee helped define the criteria for each of the 12 required GIS layers and prioritized these layers according to their perceived importance to the FSP.

Resulting layers and weights are as follows:

Dataset	Number	Percent	Specifics
Slope	2	0.82	
Public Drinking Water	3	1.22	groundwater data
Wildfire Assessment	7	2.85	fire dependent species
Natural Heritage	17	6.94	t&e MNFI standards
Developing Areas	19	7.76	look at Picture Michigan data
Wetlands	19	7.76	group all wetlands together
Proximity to Public Lands	20	8.16	.5 miles from public land
Watersheds	21	8.57	Natural Rivers & Trout Stream
Riparian (River Corridor)	27	11.02	100 foot buffer/side
Forest Health	30	12.24	pest & disease
Forest Patches	35	14.29	1000 acres UP/500 acres LP
Private Lands	45	18.37	

Deb indicated that the DNR is still working on digitizing the layer that shows where all the Forest Stewardship plans are located. Then, the FSP can assess how closely we are matching the priority forest areas in Michigan.

Several members of the FSAC indicated they will provide links, information or assistance on refining these layers. Dean Solomon provided a link to a wetlands layer at CGI, Rich Bowman said that TNC might have better T&E data, and Yu Man Lee offered possible assistance from MNFI. Huff also indicated that the DNR will be hosting a half day meeting for DNR foresters and Wildlife biologists to allow their input into this process. This meeting will be held in January 2008.

Finally, it was noted that this GIS analysis has been done nationwide, so that the USFS and the US Congress can get an idea of where the priority forest areas are nationwide, and how the programs are meeting those needs. It is probable that future planning efforts will include this GIS analysis.

FIVE YEAR FOREST STEWARDSHIP PLAN

The 5 year FSP plan, which covers 2005-2009, was revised according to the priorities set by the Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee, and had been sent out by email prior to the meeting. The plan was discussed, and agreed upon by all voting members present. A signature sheet was

passed around for voting members to sign, and the State Forester has approved the plan. The plan will be posted on the Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee web page at: http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-39002_44009---,00.html Or you can go to: www.michigan.gov/dnr and click on “Commissions, Boards, and Committees” and then click on the left hand menu “Forest Stewardship Advisory Committee”. Jerry G. suggested that the FSAC focus on reviewing the members each year.

INDIVIDUAL PARTNER REPORTS

- **NRCS** - Mr. Ward described the latest developments related to the 2007 Farm Bill. He indicated that there is a new NRCS State Conservationist, Gary Lee. He noted that the challenge is the lack of forestry technical assistance partners – with the loss of some Conservation District foresters, reductions in Service Foresters, less extension time, etc. EQIP is fairly secure but he is not sure how the consolidation will go. It may get extended till March or April. NRCS has determined that ALL EQIP funds must be obligated by December 14, 2007.
- **Extension** Mr. Dean Solomon noted several training sessions were provided on the Qualified Forest program, and over 20% of the people said they would sign up. There is frustration in the incorrect information about the recapture tax. There is an ongoing successful program for Master Woodland Stewards. FSP is trying to obtain a ‘coupon’ for FSP plan holders so that they receive a discount on the Master Woodland Steward course.
- **The Nature Conservancy** Mr. Rich Bowman reported there will be an all day seminar at the Kellogg Center “21st Century Conservation Tools”. There is a groundwater assessment tool and a wind power assessment tool. You can find more information at www.nature.org/michigan The Nature Conservancy is a partner in the Forest Legacy project, which was approved for \$2 million in the US Senate and House 08 budget. TNC is also doing work on the Assessment related to matrix forests. They may create a new office in NLP.
- **Tree Farm** Mr. Des Jones outlined the latest developments in Michigan Tree Farm. They have 4 committee meetings per year. New certifications are coming along well. They have sponsored a few field days, including one in Livingston County with over a 100 people. Tree Farm offers college students an inspector training course. Michigan hopes to develop a training program on how to deal with the legislature.
- **Michigan Forest Association** Mr. VanDyke gave Michigan Forest Association’s (MFA) update. MFA also offers a scholarship program to forestry students.
- **Michigan Forest Products Council** Mr. George Berghorn reported that they have two outreach and education groups, the MFRA and the SFE. They have a newsletter a few times per year. They have sent many information packets to landowners on Qualified Forests. MFRA puts on a teacher tour in conjunction with MN, and WI. It is a 3 day tour for teachers to get in woods, mills, etc. The feedback is that it is eye opening about forest management. Then, they incorporate it into their work. Also, MFRA works with PLT. Also they have a TREE program for children. They are looking at another program, called WOODLINKS, that focuses on manufacturing. MFPC is also working with a legislator to look at the QF withdrawal inequities. They have created 2 publications in the last 2 years. They are working with a wood branding program, which will be an opportunity to tell the Michigan story.

- **Master Logger.** The board reviewed 14 applications for pass or fail. Most were approved. Many of the problems were safety issues.
- **Landowner Incentive Program (LIP)** Mr. Brian Picolo Michigan just received funding through 2010 for LIP. They are still focusing on habitat projects in MI. Brian does about 350 acres of prescribed burning on private lands per year. These burns are done via contractor.
- **Michigan Natural Features Inventory** Ms. Yu Man Lee said they are working on priority areas for conservation. These will be available on their website. They are also completing an Invasive Species booklet. MNFI is interested in collaborating with partners. They are completing their community abstract sheets.
- **Huron Pines RC&D and Conservation Resource Alliance** Ms. Ryan described some programs administered by the two Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) organizations in the NLP. The Conservation Resource Alliance (RC&D) has the “Wildlink Program,” while the Huron Pines RC&D has the Pigeon River Wildlife Initiative. Although both focus on wildlife interests, they are incorporating FSP plans wherever applicable. Kathy is available to spearhead a discussion session for foresters.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30pm.

Appendix A
Forest Stewardship Program
State Advisory Committee
Forest Legacy Program Update
December 3, 2007

2006 FLP

We have approved funding for \$1,970,000 for acquisition of conservation easement (CE) #4 on approximately 37,000 acres as part of the FLP portion of the Northern Great Lakes Forest project (formerly called Kamehameha). The DNR was ready to close on this easement in October, but could not due to the State not having a balanced budget. We are now waiting for Legislative approval and final FLP approval to spend the funding and close on CE #4. We hope to close before the end of the year.

2007 FLP

We have approved funding for \$3,500,000 for the FLP portion of CE #5 of the Northern Great Lakes Forest project. This funding is for the acquisition of a CE on approximately 53,967 acres. We are currently working on title work, appraisals, stewardship plan reviews, etc. for this phase of the project. Once that has been completed and we receive FLP approval, we will close on CE #5.

2008 FLP

We submitted funding for \$4,000,000 for the FLP portion of CE #6 of the Northern Great Lakes Forest project. This project is included in the President’s Request to be funded;

however, the funding has been reduced to \$2,000,000. This funding is for the acquisition of a CE on approximately 60,578 acres.

2009 FLP

Due to our 2008 FLP request being reduced by half, we have submitted the final request for the FLP portion of CE #6 of the Northern Great Lakes Forest project. This request was submitted in mid-October and will be reviewed in early January for possible funding.

Forest Legacy Subcommittee

Due to the fact that we have now submitted the final phase of the Northern Great Lakes Forest project, we will again be accepting nominations for FLP projects in 2008 (for FY2010 funding). In order to coordinate this, we need to re-form the Forest Legacy Subcommittee. The fact that a Forest Legacy Subcommittee did not exist was noted as an "issue" when we had the Michigan Forest Legacy Program Review in 2006. Attached you will find an example of "Forest Legacy Committee Purpose and Membership" for the state of Maine. This was provided to me as a good example that Michigan should use in establishing the subcommittee.

Forest Legacy Program – 2008 Northeastern Area Meeting

Michigan has been asked to host the 2008 Northeastern Area meeting for the Forest Legacy Program. The meeting details still in the planning stage.

Appendix B Forest Land Enhancement Program Summary Michigan accomplishments through FY 2007

FLEP practice	Acres	Contract cost	Paid	# of contracts
FLEP 1 – FSP plan-	4108	\$12,050.50	\$7,546/25	29
FLEP 2 - Regeneration	3608.7	\$615,371.32	\$306,732.14	144
FLEP 3 – FSI	2177.8	\$86,328.95	\$38,793.23	80
FLEP 5 – Water quality improvement	185.3	\$47,607.76	\$22,198.48	26
FLEP 6 – Wildlife Habitat	620.40	\$93,718.92	\$28,755.06	96
FLEP 7 – Forest Health	62.95	\$55,002.50	\$36,442.93	9
FLEP 8 – Invasive species	217.1	\$61,805.40	\$40,944.02	13
FLEP 10 – Catastrophic events	9	\$2,072.00	\$1,274.92	2
Totals	10989.25	\$973,957.35	\$475,140.78	399